Application No.: 10/028,172 Docket No.: 322732000401

Amendment to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows.

Please cancel claims 58 and 60, without prejudice or disclaimer.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 to 30 (canceled)

Claim 31 (currently amended): A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection comprising a solid phase sensitized with

(a) a genetic recombinant HCV antigen having a molecular weight of 10,000 or more and

(b) conjugated HCV antigens comprising

(i) a first HCV antigen conjugated with a carrier protein; and

(ii) a second HCV antigen conjugated with a carrier protein;

wherein ~~each of~~ the first HCV antigen comprises a first synthetic peptide having a molecular weight of less than 10,000 and the second HCV antigen comprises a second synthetic peptide different from the first synthetic peptide, the second synthetic peptide has a molecular weight of less than 10,000.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 31, wherein the genetic recombinant HCV antigen comprises an HCV non-structural region protein.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 31, wherein the genetic recombinant HCV antigen comprises NS3 antigen.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 31, wherein the first and second HCV antigens are independently selected from the group consisting of HCV non-structural region proteins and HCV structural region proteins.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 31, wherein the solid phase is directly sensitized with the genetic recombinant HCV antigen.

Claim 36 (currently amended): A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection comprising a solid phase sensitized with (a) a genetic recombinant HCV antigen having a molecular weight of 10,000 or more and (b) one or more conjugated HCV antigens, wherein the conjugated HCV antigen comprises a synthetic peptide ~~HCV antigen~~ conjugated with a carrier protein and the synthetic peptide has a molecular weight of less than 10,000.

Claim 37 (currently amended): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the HCV antigen of the conjugated HCV antigen is selected from the group consisting of core antigen, NS4 ~~peptide~~ antigen and NS5 antigen.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the HCV antigen of the conjugated HCV antigen is selected from the group consisting of HCV non-structural region proteins and HCV structural region proteins.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the HCV antigen of the conjugated HCV antigen comprises core antigen, NS4 antigen and NS5 antigen.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the carrier protein and the HCV antigen of the conjugated HCV antigen are present at a ratio of about 1:3 to 1:20 (carrier protein: HCV antigen).

Claim 41 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the carrier protein comprises a water-soluble protein.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 41, wherein the water-soluble protein is selected from the group consisting of BSA, ovalbumin and hemocyanin.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the genetic recombinant HCV antigen is conjugated with a carrier protein.

Claims 44 to 50 (canceled)

Claim 51 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 31, wherein the solid phase comprises carrier particles.

Claims 52 to 54 (canceled)

Claim 55 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 51, wherein the carrier particle is selected from the group consisting of polystyrene latex particle, copolymer latex particle, erythrocyte and gelatin particle.

Claim 56 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the solid phase comprises carrier particles.

Claim 57 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 56, wherein the carrier particles are selected from the group consisting of polystyrene latex particle, copolymer latex particle, erythrocyte and gelatin particle.

Claim 58 (canceled)

Claim 59 (currently amended): The diagnostic reagent of claim 31 [[58]], wherein the synthetic peptide has a molecular weight of 1,000 to 5,000.

Claim 60 (canceled)

Claim 61 (currently amended): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36 [[60]], wherein the synthetic peptide has a molecular weight of 1,000 to 5,000.

Claim 62 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 31, wherein the solid phase comprises a microtiter plate or a test tube.

Claim 63 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the solid phase comprises a microtiter plate or a test tube.

Claim 64 (new): The diagnostic reagent of claim 31, wherein the carrier protein has a molecular weight of 10,000 to 1,000,000.

Claim 65 (new): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the carrier protein has a molecular weight of 10,000 to 1,000,000.

Claim 66 (new): A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection comprising a solid phase sensitized with

(a) a genetic recombinant HCV antigen having a molecular weight of 10,000 or more and

(b) conjugated HCV antigens comprising

(i) a first HCV antigen conjugated with a carrier protein; and

(ii) a second HCV antigen conjugated with a carrier protein;

wherein each of the first HCV antigen and the second HCV antigen has a molecular weight of less than 10,000, and the first HCV antigen is core antigen.

Claim 67 (new): The diagnostic reagent of claim 66, wherein the second HCV antigen is NS4 antigen.

Claim 68 (new): The diagnostic reagent of claim 66, wherein the conjugated HCV antigens further comprises a third HCV antigen conjugated with a carrier protein.